



Wisconsin E-Brief for Partnership Schools

January 2011

An e-newsletter from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
Community Learning and Partnerships Team
to promote family-school-community partnerships for children's learning

Register Now!

Beyond Random Acts of Partnership: Building the Climate for Student Success will be held on Wednesday, March 23, at the Milwaukee Hilton City Center. Join parents, educators, and community leaders for a day of roundtables and conversation to learn and share best practices for creating schools that welcome all families and engage all students in learning.

*Don't just attend this workshop. **Participate in this workshop!*** Panelists will set the stage to guide and inform collaborative conversations in small workgroups. Participants will gain new ideas, perspectives and connections to encourage and build effective partnerships in their own school.

Sponsored by Wisconsin PTA, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Wisconsin Education Association Council. Supported by Wisconsin FACETS and Milwaukee Public Schools.

Register at <http://www.dpi.wi.gov/fscp/index.html>. For more information, contact Jane Grinde at DPI: jane.grinde@dpi.wi.gov or 608-266-9356.

Partnership Resources

Spotlight on Schools Involving Fathers and Male Volunteers



Over 25 million American children live apart from their biological fathers, but nearly 75% of children live with a father-figure (2009 U.S. Census). Research shows that children with fathers engaged in their learning tend to do better in school and to enjoy better mental health and relationships later in life. The following resources can help schools make positive connections with fathers and male volunteers.

- Sun Prairie WatchDOGS Program connects children to male role models. Read a *Wisconsin State Journal* article at http://host.madison.com/wsj/news/local/education/local_schools/article_2b94db4c-0216-11e0-b915-001cc4c002e0.html
- WatchDOGS is an initiative of the National Center for Fathering of Kansas City. Learn more about starting a program at your school: http://www.fathers.com/content/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=21&Itemid=60/

- Lakeland Family Resource Center, Spooner, sponsored a Dad and Me Science and Supper Night for daughters and dads. Participants watched a UW-Extension instructor use a Gem light, made volcanoes and wave bottles, and ate sloppy joes together. See a description at Promising Practices 2009-10 (p. 6) at <http://sites.google.com/site/dpivistaproject/Promising-Practices>
- How are schools involving fathers in children's learning? Visit this site for more ideas: <http://www.teachersfirst.com/fathers.html>
- Fathers bring their own style and strengths to improving children's literacy. View book and activity ideas at: http://www.sedl.org/pubs/sedl-letter/v19n02/child_lit.html.
- How father-friendly is your school? Review this checklist by the National Fatherhood Initiative: <http://www.fatherhood.org/Page.aspx?pid=945>.
- View a PowerPoint presentation on ways for school staff to engage fathers in children's learning: <http://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&pid=sites&srcid=ZGVmYXVsdGRvbWFpbnxkcGl2aXN0YXByb2plY3R8Z3g6MjFjFjNzBIMWUwM2I2OTg2NQ>.

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Positive Partnership Practices

These ideas come from the Wisconsin DPI VISTA volunteers in schools, community sites, and public libraries around the state working to strengthen family-school-community partnerships. For more great ideas, read the VISTA newsletters at <http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/fscp/vnwsltrhm.html>

West Milwaukee Intermediate School students were challenged to complete Good Citizenship Bingo cards so they could enter a raffle to win prizes donated by local businesses. The goal of the activity was to encourage positive, respectful behavior by students at school and in the community. Students had one month to engage in the positive community behaviors on the bingo cards. When they did something on the card, an adult would initial the box and put the date on it. Good citizenship behaviors in the bingo boxes included standing up for someone being bullied, teaching someone a new skill, writing a thank you card, and spending time with an elderly person.

Sennett Middle School, Madison, created the Sennett Parent Connection Google Group, an online forum for families, staff and community members to communicate with one another through virtual discussions and file-sharing. Its purpose is to help parents and staff work as partners to provide a quality education to all Sennett students. Parents can communicate with other parents directly, without having to go through the school. Any advocate for Sennett Middle School students (parents, teachers, support staff, etc.) can become a member and share information on the Google Group. Members can post messages regarding school issues, current events, community resources or other opportunities, and can receive daily or weekly email updates on new posts to the Group.

Maple Tree Elementary, Milwaukee, sponsored a Black History Poster Contest for families to learn about the civil rights movement together. Families submitted entry forms at the beginning of February and had two and a half weeks to work on their projects. The school provided families who entered the voluntary, school-wide contest with poster board to create a project about a famous person or event in the civil rights movement. Third through first-place winners were announced during the school's Black History Program and awarded prizes. Community members provided monetary and in-kind donations for prizes. Administrators, teachers, and community members on the school's Partnership Action Team judged the projects.

Partnership Question of the Month

What do parents contribute to the Partnership Action Team? Inviting parents to serve on the Action Team involves them as decision makers and creates a forum for school staff to hear about and respond to the insights, perceptions, and concerns families have as they help shape the school's vision for learning. Learn ideas for getting parents to serve on school teams from the DPI Action Team Partnership Toolkit at <http://www.dpi.wi.gov/fscp/act-tm-q9.html>.

NNPS Update

District Leadership Conference

This intensive workshop March 24-25 in Baltimore, MD, prepares district directors and facilitators for partnerships to lead and support schools in building sustainable, goal-oriented programs of school, family, and community partnerships. Attendees leave the workshop with a customized strategic plan for the next school year. Learn more at http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/Professional_Development/NNPS_RFT.htm.

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The **Wisconsin E-Brief for Partnership Schools** is a monthly newsletter of news, events, research, and promising practices to keep your school, district, or organization focused and moving forward on family-school-community partnerships for children's learning. You are receiving this e-brief because of your involvement in a partnership-related event or initiative sponsored by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI). *If you prefer NOT to receive this online newsletter, please reply to this email with the subject line: "Remove from list."*

Your comments, ideas, and stories are vital to this newsletter. Please tell us your achievements in promoting children's learning with families and community members, as well as your challenges and questions. Partnership practitioners learn most from each other, so ***let's hear from you!***